

REVIEWS

Baja California Plant Field Guide. By NORMAN C. ROBERTS Natural History Publishing Company, P.O. Box 962, La Jolla, CA 92037. 1989. xv + 309 pp. \$22.95 plus \$2.00 postage and handling.

This long-anticipated successor to the out-of-print *A Field Guide to the Common and Interesting Plants of Baja California* by Coyle and Roberts is a third larger. Items criticized in the earlier work have been meticulously eliminated.

After initial division into gymnosperms, angiosperms, monocots and dicots, arrangement of the families, and of genera within families, is alphabetical. Most users will undoubtedly find this arrangement preferable to the systematic arrangement of the previous work. The quality of the photographs for the more than 275 species illustrated is excellent. Oftentimes, habit photos are included as well as close-ups of flower and fruit. Although this volume treats only about one-tenth of the plants included in Wiggins' *Flora of Baja California*, those species most apt to be noticed by travellers are included. Because the same vernacular name is sometimes applied to more than one plant, there is occasionally a problem in matching photos with text. In one unfortunate incident (p. 87) the titles for "Sotol" and "Lechuguilla" are reversed. The comparative full page plates for species of *Cercidium*, *Acacia*, and *Prosopis* are most useful. Expanded ethnobotanical information is most welcome.

Introductory material provides travellers with valuable and interesting information regarding such subjects as physical geography, geology, diverse climate, endemism, and phytogeographic areas. The section treating the Cape Region might be less confusing to the uninitiated if discussion were confined to the geographic Cape Region south of the isthmus of La Paz. Here, the mountains are granitic, instead of volcanic as in the Sierra de la Giganta to the north. Roberts' inclusion of the latter in the Cape Region area is made on the basis of the vegetational classification proposed by Shreve and Wiggins. During early geologic periods the Cape Region mountains remained as an island when all but the higher peaks about as far north as Lat. 28°N were submerged. Furthermore, according to the Plate theory, before its separation from mainland Mexico, what was to become the peninsula, was attached to the mainland much farther south. This may serve to explain the presence in the Cape Region mountains of some more southerly mainland elements. Shrubby *Hybanthus mexicanus* is an example. As in the previous *Guide*, the illustrated glossary is useful, as is the expanded glossary of botanical terms and Spanish words. Unfortunately, the illustration of spike (p. 69) does not clearly conform to the definition. Roberts includes in his Bibliography Miguel del Barco's important contribution to our knowledge of the natural history of the peninsula. However, he does not mention the fact that English translations of two important sections of Barco's book have been published by Glen Dawson.

"Aficionados" of Baja California, as well as new travellers, will warmly welcome Norman Roberts' contribution as an aid to their appreciation of this fascinating peninsula.—ANNETTA CARTER, University Herbarium, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720.

The Biogeography of Fire in the San Bernardino Mountains of California—A Historical Study. By RICHARD A. MINNICH. University of California Publications in Geography Volume 28, University of California Press, Berkeley. 120 pp. plus plates, soft cover.

This modest size book (74 pp. text) deals with more than the ecology of wildfires. Half of the pages are devoted to a historical account of the biogeography of plant